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Leader of the Council
Councillor Keith House

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Dear Brian

The opportunity to secure a Freeport for the Solent area presents an exciting once-in-a generation opportunity to stimulate vital economic growth and realise the levelling-up of our communities.

Many thanks for giving us the opportunity to be actively involved in formulating the bid to Government which I understand is to be submitted on 5 February. I understand that a letter is required from the local authority with statutory responsibility for planning and business rates collection. I am delighted to be able to confirm Eastleigh Borough Council's total support for both the overall Freeport proposal including the inclusion of the land to the North East of the Airport and adjoining Railway Works.

In terms of the Freeport proposal, it is a bid that puts the environmental considerations at its heart and establishes the Solent as a pioneering area for pathway to Net Zero, whilst ensuring the Solent continues to perform a critical economic role as the United Kingdom adjusts to being a much more independent trading nation.

With three islands, three peninsulas, and 340 miles of coastline, the Solent economy is inextricably influenced by its geography, which, throughout history, has given the Solent a unique economic and cultural identity. It is an area with an outstanding physical geography and natural environment (including the New Forest National Park and the Isle of Wight), which co-exist alongside a number of nationally significant economic assets such as the Port of Southampton (the UK's primary export port and largest exporter to non-EU markets), the Exxon Mobil petrol-chemical facility at Fawley (the UK's largest and most complex refinery), Her Majesty's Naval Base in Portsmouth (the home of the Royal Navy), Portsmouth International Port (providing more routes to the EU than any other UK port), the Marchwood Sea Mounting Facility and Commercial Port, and of course Southampton International Airport. Combined, these assets define the Solent as the UK's primary Gateway for the economy, benefitting from its natural advantage of being strategically located with the UK's closest deep water ports to the key

international shipping super-seaways. It is this natural advantage, combination of assets, and strategic function that sees the Solent economy producing much larger spill-over effects into the UK economy than many other UK regions. In this way, investment to support much-needed levelling up of the Solent economy, also supports levelling up in other parts of the UK.

I am also pleased to be able to confirm the support of the Council for the inclusion of the Airport and Riverside site in the Freeport bid. The development of this site, virtually in the centre of the Borough of Eastleigh, has long been an aspiration for the Council and indeed you will recall that in 2016 we included this site as part of a joint proposals with the Isle of Wight to establish a Solent Gateway Enterprise Zone. The development potential is also recognised in our emerging Local Plan and our long-term aim is to see the area for development expand both north and south, including the construction of a link road, which will further maximise the opportunity for commercial and residential growth.

The proposed Freeport bid also recognises the importance of Southampton International Airport. If the Solent area is to realise its true potential and establish a strong and vibrant regional economy it will need to ensure the Airport is able demonstrate it has a long-term sustainable business plan. The Council's Local Planning Committee will be considering an application for a runway extension which is recognised as being vital to the future financial sustainable of the Airport.

We are also working closely with the developers of the Railway Works and again the local planning committee will be considering an application for further development if this site.

I hope this letter assures you of the support of Eastleigh Borough Council and wish you every success with the bid.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Keith House'.

Keith House
Leader of the Council